

# Investigating the Effect of Participation in the Cyberspace in the Relations between Spouses<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between participation in the cyberspace with marriage satisfaction and tendency to divorce. The present study is a correlational research from research methodology perspective. The statistical population consists of married males and females in the city of Isfahan in 2015. A sample of 217 couples was selected randomly. In order to collect the research data, three questionnaires were used including researcher-developed questionnaire of participation in the social networks, questionnaire of tendency to divorce (Roosevelt et al., 1986), and questionnaire of marriage satisfaction (Enrich, 2000). In order to analyze the research data and test the hypotheses, Pearson Correlation Coefficient Test, Multi-variable Regression Model, and Structural Equation Modeling were used. Our findings revealed that females used social networks such as WhatsApp, Viber, Line, and Instagram more than males. The results of regression model revealed that there are significant relationships among participation in the social networks with marriage satisfaction and divorce tendency. In other words, increase in the participation in social networks lead to less marriage satisfaction and much divorce tendency.

**Keywords:** Participation in Cyberspace, Marriage Satisfaction, Couples

## 1. Introduction

Family is considered as the main ground of individual identity formation in the different cultures. Nobody cannot be defined independently from his/her family and it is the family that make personality of us. On the other hand, family is the main focus in which physical and mental education can be done. Family is considered as a system that consists of a couple. In this regard, husband and wife play different roles toward each other. This is why families have to recognize the effective factors on the emergence, formation, and reinforcement of family relations. When husband and wife satisfy their social needs, they will be able to play their roles appropriately. Attention to satisfaction of psychological, affective, and physical needs of child and their sound education depend on the marriage satisfaction of parents. Such a satisfaction improves the ability of parents in solving the mental problems and also promotes the physical and mental health of couples. As a result, total health of society will be improved (Mohammadi, 2014: 12). When the family functions (such as life, social, cognitive, and affective functions) are damaged, family members will lose their satisfaction. Incremental decrease in the satisfaction of family members leads to mental and social problems and then leads to divorce (Sepehrian, 2010: 19). Increase in the participation in social networks leads to several problems for their users. Because of addictiveness of social networks, these instruments decrease couples' attention to each other. This is why that marriage satisfaction is decreased and social problems are increased considerably in many cases. Indeed, couples spend a large part of their time in such networks and ignore each other. Such inattention decreases satisfaction of couples and thereby create several problems for them (Javadi, 2011: 11). If family be health, then health people will enter to the society. Otherwise, divorce will be resulted (Ebrahimipour et al., 2014: 6). During past years, the use of social networks has been increased considerably as a communication tool. Indeed, social networks play an important role in the life of many people (Shahnoshi, 2013: 24). Given the importance of social networks and their role in the current environment, the present study aims to investigate the relationships among participation in the cyberspace with marriage satisfaction and tendency to divorce. Indeed, the authors of this study were determined to answer this question: is there any significant relationship among participation in the cyberspace with marriage satisfaction and tendency to divorce?

The results of past studies revealed that lack of moral agreement between husband and wife, age differences, marriage behaviors, addiction, unemployment, economic problems, unsatisfied needs of couples, positive images of divorce outcomes, interfere of others in the marriage life, and differences in the educational levels are the main factors that affect tendency to divorce both directly or indirectly (Rahimi et al., 2007). Naeimi (2008) investigates the effect of family interaction and satellite in formation of modern values in the couples and divorce. Shamszade and Shirazizade (2009) study the role of information technology in the quality of family life.

Eslami (2011) investigate the effect of social networks on different aspects of life. He found that social

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networks play an important role in the life. Dosti et al. (2012) found that about 87% of married males had not any tendency to participate with their wife in the social networks. Their results also found that there is a significant positive relationship between marriage conflicts and the use of social networks. Kermani et al. (2013) investigate the role of internet in family values and found that the use of internet affects rational values positively and traditional values negatively. Latifi et al. (2014) investigate the relationship between the use of mobile, computer, internet, and marriage satisfaction of couples. They found that the use of mobile, computer, internet affect their conventional responses, personality, parental roles, and beliefs orientation significantly.

Katherine et al. (2006) investigate and review the literature of internet betrayal, double standards, and differences in the perspectives of males and females. They found that many people use internet for creating friendly and romantic relations with others. Docan et al. (2007) investigate online betrayal and its evaluation and treatment.

Chan et al. (2008) investigate divorce in Malaysia and found that betrayal, other love, and affective problems are the main effective factors on the divorce. Robyn et al. (2011) investigate the effect of internet use on the family function. They found that abuse of internet is the main effective factor of couple tendency to spend less time with their family. Lasen and Casado (2012) investigate the relationship between mobile and couple intimation and found that there is a significant relationship between revolution in the communication patterns and sexual issues. In other words, revolution in the communication patterns paves the ground for correcting marriage conflicts and also creates opportunities for discussion.

The researchers of Texas University investigate the relationship between social networks, marriage satisfaction, and divorce. They found that abuse of social networks may lead to conflict in the marriage relations and divorce.

Valenzuela et al. (2014) investigate the relationship among social networks and websites, welfare in the marriage life, and divorce in the United States of America. They found that there are significant relationships among social networks and websites, welfare in the marriage life, and divorce. Aaron et al. (2014) investigate the effect of social networks, trust, and satisfaction of couples and found that sharing the information with friends is the main factor that decreases interactions between couples. Saidur (2015) investigate the role of Facebook in the quantity and quality of romantic relations between couples and found that the abuse Facebook results in several negative outcomes such as lack of quality in the couples relations. It also affects affective relations of couples and quality of such relations. Russell (2015) investigate the role of Facebook in the divorce and found that abuse of Facebook results in divorce significantly.

## 2. Research methodology

The present study is a descriptive-correlation research in which multi-variable regression model and structural equation modeling were used for analyzing the research data and testing the hypotheses. The statistical population consists of married males and females in the city of Isfahan in 2015. A sample of 217 couples was selected randomly. In order to collect the research data, three questionnaires were used including researcher-developed questionnaire of participation in the social networks with 37 items, questionnaire of tendency to divorce (Roosevelt et al., 1986), and questionnaire of marriage satisfaction (Enrich, 2000). The first questionnaire consists of three dimensions including individual, social, and cultural dimensions. The reliability of this questionnaire has been measured through Cronbach' Alpha Coefficient. The total coefficient was 0.89 for our questionnaire. The coefficients of individual, social, and cultural dimensions were 0.78, 0.72, and 0.77 respectively. Enrich (2000) reported that reliability of marriage satisfaction is 0.92. He also found that the correlations between dimensions of family satisfaction were from 41% to 60% and the correlations between dimensions of life satisfaction were between 32% to 41%. The reliability of this questionnaire and its parts (including marriage satisfaction, communications, conflict solving, and ideal distortion) are 0.92, 0.85, 0.86, 0.87, and 0.82 respectively. Roosevelt et al. (1986) reported that the reliability of the questionnaire of tendency to divorce and its dimensions (feelings, loyalty, and negligence) are 0.91, 0.76, 0.63, and 0.86 respectively. Our findings showed that overall reliability of this questionnaire is 0.85.

## 3. Findings

Based on our findings in terms of demographic characteristics of sample members, a large part of sample members had 26-35 years old and a few of them had 56-65 years old. In terms of gender, 29.5% of the sample members were male and 70.5% of them were female. From educational level perspective, 32.2% of the respondents had high school degree, 61.3% of the respondents had M.Sc., and 5.5% of them had M.A. and Ph.D. About 25.8% of the respondents indicate that their financial condition is good; 70.5% of the respondents indicate their financial condition moderate; 3.7% of the respondents indicate their financial condition bad. About 67.6% of the respondents used WhatsApp as their main social network. Also 10.6% of the respondents (3.7% males and 6.9% females) indicate that their experience in using such networks is less than 3 months; 41% of the respondents (10.6% males and 30.4% females) have used social networks for more than 6 months; 22.6% of the

respondents (5.5% males and 5.5% females) have used social networks for more than two years. 39.6% of the respondents (12.9% males and 2.7% females) have used social networks for an hour a day; 39.6% of respondents (12.9% males and 27.6% females) have used social networks for 2-3 hours a day; 37% of the respondents have used social networks for 4-8 hours a day; and 3.7% of them have used social networks for more than 9 hours a day. The respondents indicate that they used social networks in the night for attaining information and news, communication with friends, improving scientific levels, and entertainment.

As indicated previously, Pearson Correlation Coefficient Test, Multi-variable Regression Model, and Structural Equation Modeling were used for analyzing the research data and testing the hypotheses.

**Main hypothesis:** there are significant relationships among participation in the social networks, marriage satisfaction, and tendency to divorce in the city of Isfahan.

**Table 1: the results of correlation coefficients among participation in the social networks, marriage satisfaction, and tendency to divorce**

Rows	Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Participation in the social networks	1.00						
2	Marriage satisfaction	-0.23**	1.00					
3	Ideal distortion	-0.28**	0.68**	1.00				
4	Communications	-0.24**	0.60**	0.61**	1.00			
5	Conflict resolve	-0.17**	0.77**	0.54**	0.48**	1.00		
6	Tendency to divorce	0.28**	-0.63**	-0.48**	-0.45**	-0.47**	1.00	

\*\* $P \leq 0.01$ ; \* $P \leq 0.05$

Based on the results of table 1, it can be said that there is a significant relationships among participation in the social networks, marriage satisfaction, and tendency to divorce.

**Table 2: the results of regression model**

Model	Sum of squares	df	Average of squares	F	Sig	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Error
Participation in the social networks	5946.11	6	991.01	4.65	0.01	0.34	0.10	14.58

Based on the results of table 2, it can be said that marriage satisfaction and tendency to divorce can be used for predicting participation in the social networks ( $P \leq 0.01$ ).

**Table 3: the results of multi-variable regression model**

Variables	Standardized Beta	t	Sig
Fixed	-	8.37	0.01
Marriage satisfaction	0.05	0.38	0.70
Communications	-0.17	-1.80	0.04
Conflicts resolve	-0.07	-0.79	0.42
Ideal distortion	0.04	0.42	0.67
Tendency to divorce	0.19	2.17	0.03

Based on the results of table 3, it can be said that tendency to divorce (0.19) and communications (-0.17) can predict participation in the social networks ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

The result of structural equation modeling is shown in figure 1. Also the coefficients of different factors are indicated in table 4. Also standard error (S.E) and other measures are indicated in this table.

**Table 4: regression weights of dimensions of marriage satisfaction and tendency to divorce**

Regression weights	Standardized estimations	S.E.	C.R.	Sig
Marriage satisfaction-social stress	0.05	0.29	0.38	0.70
Communications-social stress	-0.17	0.19	-1.82	0.04
Conflict resolve- social stress	-0.17	0.19	-1.82	0.42
Ideal distortion - social stress	0.05	0.38	0.42	0.67
Tendency to divorce-- social stress	0.18	0.09	2.20	0.03

Based on the results of table 4, it can be said that regression weights of communications-social stress and tendency to divorce-- social stress are -0.17 and 0.18 respectively ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The results of this study revealed that there are significant relationships among participation in the cyberspace with marriage satisfaction and tendency to divorce in the city of Isfahan. This part of our findings is consistent with past findings such as Latifi et al. (2014), Ebrahimpour and Khazaei (2014), Dosti et al. (2012), Eslami (2011), Aroun et al. (2014), Texas University (2013), Roubian et al. (2011). Based on the results of this study, it can be said that expansion of social networks in the current conditions leads that many people use such networks

for communicating with others. On the other hand, the use of such networks leads that people spend their time in such areas and ignore their family members. As a result, such networks can make several problems for families. Like to others studies, our study had several limitations such as lack of motivation in the respondents in responding the questions of questionnaire. Based on the results of this study, it can be said that training the methods of using such networks is one of the main effective factors in decreasing the destructive effects of them.

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